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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 13

STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Argentina, Armenia*, Australia*, Austria, Azerbaijan*, Belgium*,
Bolivia*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Brazil, Bulgaria*, Cape Verde,
Chile, Colombia*, Costa Rica*, Croatia*, Cyprus*, Czech Republic,
Denmark, Dominican Republic*, Ecuador, Estonia*, Finland*,
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, France, Georgia*, Germany,
Greece*, Haiti*, Honduras*, Hungary*, Iceland*, Ireland, Italy,
Latvia*, Liechtenstein*, Lithuania*, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta*,
Mexico, Moldova*, Netherlands*, New Zealand*, Nicaragua*,
Norway*, Panama*, Paraguay*, Poland, Portugal*, Romania*,
Russian Federation, San Marino*, Slovakia*, Slovenia*,
South Africa, Spain*, Sweden*, Switzerland, United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Venezuela:
draft resolution

1998/... Question of the death penalty

The Commission on Human Rights

Recalling article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms the right of everyone to life, article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 6 and 37 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 2857 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971 and 32/61 of 8 December 1977 on capital punishment, as well as resolution 44/128 of 15 December 1989, in which the Assembly adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1574 (L) of 20 May 1971, 1745 (LIV) of 16 May 1973, 1930 (LVIII) of 6 May 1975, 1984/50 of 25 May 1984, 1985/33 of 29 May 1985, 1989/64 of 24 May 1989, 1990/29 of 24 May 1990, 1990/51 of 24 July 1990 and 1996/15 of 23 July 1996,

Recalling also its resolution 1997/12 of 3 April 1997 in which the Commission expressed its conviction that abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights,

Welcoming the exclusion of capital punishment from the penalties that the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Tribunal for Rwanda are authorized to impose,

Welcoming the fact that several countries, while still keeping the death penalty in their penal legislation, are applying a moratorium on executions,

Referring to the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (E/CN.4/1998/68 and Add.1-3), with respect to the Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, set out in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 of 25 May 1984,

Deeply concerned that several countries impose the death penalty in disregard of the limitations provided for in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

Concerned also that several countries, in imposing the death penalty, do not take into account the Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty,

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General containing information on changes in law and practice concerning the death penalty worldwide and further positive developments reflected in that report (E/CN.4/1998/82 and Corr.1);

2. Calls upon all States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that have not yet done so to consider acceding to or ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

3. Urges all States that still maintain the death penalty:

(a) To comply fully with their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, notably not to impose the death penalty for any but the most serious crimes, not to impose it for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age, to exclude pregnant women from capital punishment and to ensure the right to seek pardon or commutation of sentence;

(b) To observe the Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, set out in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 of 25 May 1984;

4. Calls upon all States that still maintain the death penalty:

(a) Progressively to restrict the number of offences for which the death penalty may be imposed;

(b) To establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty;

(c) To make available to the public information with regard to the imposition of the death penalty;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit to the Commission on Human Rights, in consultation with Governments, specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, a yearly supplement on changes in law and practice concerning the death penalty worldwide to his quinquennial report on capital punishment and implementation of the Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty;

6. Decides to continue consideration of the matter at its fifty-fifth session under the same agenda item.
